

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SNM-02 SS-20 L-03 AID-20 CIAE-00 INR-10

IO-14 JUSE-00 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SY-10 TRSE-00 USIA-15

NSC-10 SCI-06 OMB-01 DRC-01 /134 W

----- 052211

R 221913Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5057

INFO DEA HQS WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 0543

DEA FOR EOIL/CUSACK, ATTN STRICKLER, DA-2

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, AR

SUBJ: PROPOSAL FOR US SUPPORTED GOA INTELLIGENCE UNIT

REF: A) BA 9340

B) STATE 075143

C) STATE 093828

D) A-374, SEP 3, 1973

1. SUMMARY: AVAILABLE INFORMATION INDICATES A RAPID INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF COCAINE LABORATORIES IN NORTHEAST ARGENTINA. THE EMBASSY NARCOTICS ACTION COMMITTEE BELIEVES THIS DEVELOPMENT CAN PROBABLY BEST BE COUNTERED BY CREATING A GOA INTELLIGENCE UNIT, CHARGED WITH OBTAINING TARGETTABLE INFORMATION ON LOCATIONS AND BUILT AROUND GENDARMERIE PERSONNEL. TO TEST THIS THEORY \$15,000 IS REQUESTED FOR NONCOMMODITY INPUTS. A PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE COUNTRY ACTION PLAN IS PRESENTED. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING THE LAST FEW MONTHS, A NUMBER OF DEA SOURCES HAVE GIVEN FRAGMENTARY INFORMATION INDICATING THAT THE NUMBER OF LABORATORIES IS INCREASING IN THE NORTHEAST, EACH WITH THE POTENTIAL FOR PRODUCING COCAINE DESTINED FOR THE US MARKET. THE DATA, ALTHOUGH PERSISTENT, HAS BEEN SPOTTY AND HAS BEEN THE BYPRODUCT
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OF OTHER INVESTIGATIONS. AS THE SITUATION NOW EXISTS, UNILATERAL USG ASSETS ARE NECESSARILY CONCENTRATED IN THE GREATER BUENOS

AIRES METROPOLITAN AREA. THE FEDERAL NARCOTICS POLICE LACK BOTH THE MANPOWER AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE LEGAL AUTHORITY TO UNDERTAKE INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS IN THE AREAS INVOLVED. THE PROVINCIAL POLICE ARE NOT PROFESSIONALLY CAPABLE OF HANDLING THE ASSIGNMENT.

3. OFFSETTING THIS UNFORTUNATE COMBINATION OF CIRCUMSTANCES IS THE FACT THAT AFTER SOME 8 MONTHS OF A LACK OF FOCUS ON NARCOTICS, A DEFICIENCY CAUSED BY THE INHERENT DIFFICULTIES THAT ACCOMPANY FOUR CHANGES OF GOVERNMENT IN THAT TIME, THE GOA SEEMS NOW PREPARED TO INCREASE ITS OVERALL LEVEL OF ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY. THE REVIVAL OF CONATON (REF A) WILL NOW PERMIT RENEWAL OF FORMAL BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS BY THE CONATON/EMBASSY BINATIONAL COMMISSION ON PENDING COMMODITY PACKAGES FOR THE FEDERAL POLICE, CUSTOMS AND THE GENDARMERIE. IN THE CASE OF THE LATTER, CCINC APPROVAL (REFS B AND C) FOR COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT, VEHICLES AND AIRCRAFT, WILL LEAD TO THE CREATION OF A SPECIALIZED UNIFORMED ELEMENT WITHIN THE GENDARMERIE WHICH CAN MOVE DECISIVELY AGAINST COCA AND ITS DERIVATIVES WHILE THEY ARE IN TRANSIT.

4. WE WELCOME THESE DEVELOPMENTS AND WILL, OF COURSE, MOVE AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE ON EACH. HOWEVER, WE ALSO RECOGNIZE THAT THE COMMODITY AGREEMENT PACKAGES WILL TAKE TIME TO COMPLETE. IMPORTANT AS IS CONATON'S ROLE AS COORDINATOR FOR GOA POLICY DECISIONS, ITS INTERMINISTERIAL CHARACTER CREATES A SOMEWHAT PONDEROUS ORGANIZATION WITH A SLOW RESPONSE REACTION TIME. WHILE THIS MAY BE NECESSARY WHEN CONSIDERING MATTERS OF EITHER BASIC POLICY OR INTERMINISTERIAL CONCERN, IT USUALLY PRECLUDES QUICK ACTION. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THAT THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING PROVIDES SUFFICIENT FLEXIBILITY TO SUPPORT A VENTURE WITH A SINGLE ELEMENT OF THE GOA, WHEN NO COMMODITY INPUTS ARE NEEDED, WITHOUT CONATON CLEARANCE. WE FURTHER BELIEVE THAT THE COCAINE LABORATORY SITUATION WARRANTS SUCH A VENTURE WITH THE GENDARMERIE, A HIGHLY QUALIFIED FORCE WITH A NUMBER OF WELL TRAINED INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS WHO KNOW, AND HAVE LEGAL AUTHORITY FOR ACTION IN MUCH OF THE AREA CONCERNED.

5. FORTUNATELY, THE ANNUAL JANUARY CHANGES OF COMMAND WITHIN
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THE GENDARMERIE HAVE GIVEN IT A NEW COMMANDER, BRIGADIER GENERAL ALBERTO SAMUEL CACERES, AND A NEW G-2, COMANDANTE MAYOR BOMBELLI, BOTH OF WHOM ARE COMPETENT, HARD WORKING, AND MOST GERMANE, HAVE STATED AN INTEREST IN EXPANDING THE GENDARMERIE'S NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT ROLE THROUGH THE PROPOSED STRIKE FORCE.

6. IN ADDITION TO THE STRIKE FORCE, THE PERTINENT ELEMENTS OF THE EMBASSY NARCOTICS ACTION COMMITTEE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THE GENDARMERIE IS ALSO IN A POSITION TO UNDERTAKE ALMOST IMMEDIATELY A GREAT NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT ROLE THROUGH THE CREATION OF A

SMALL, PLAINCLOTHES INTELLIGENCE GROUP TO PINPOINT THE LOCATION OF EXISTING LABORATORIES. AS WE ENVISION IT, THE TASK OF SUCH A UNIT, PERHAPS CONSISTING OF NO MORE THAN FIVE MEN, AND WORKING IN CLOSE LIAISON WITH DEA, WOULD DEVELOP INFORMATION WHICH WOULD BE ACTIONABLE BY AN APPROPRIATE POLICE UNIT, EITHER THE FEDERAL, OR PROVINCIAL, OR BY THE GENDARMERIE ITSELF, DEPENDING UPON CIRCUMSTANCES IN A GIVEN SITUATION.

7. INITIALLY AT LEAST, SUCH A UNIT SHOULD BE ON AN EXPERIMENTAL BASIS. WE CANNOT QUANTITATIVELY MEASURE THE NUMBER OF LABORATORIES. NOR, DESPITE THE GENERALLY HIGH PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF THE GENDARMERIE PERSONNEL, CAN WE BE ASSURED OF THEIR CAPABILITY TO FUNCTION IN AN UNDERCOVER INTELLIGENCE SITUATION. FURTHER, LACKING LOCAL PRECEDENT, WE CAN NOT GIVE ANY MONETARY ESTIMATES IN TERMS OF EXPECTED COST EFFECTIVENESS. (USG PERSONNEL COSTS WILL BE MINIMAL.) NEVERTHELESS WE VIEW THE LABORATORY SITUATION AS SUFFICIENTLY SERIOUS TO PROPOSE THE UNIT, INITIALLY ON A TEMPORARY EXPERIMENTAL BASIS, AS THE BEST SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE.

8. THEREFORE, THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT THE PROPOSAL FOR THE CREATION OF A GENDARMERIE INTELLIGENCE UNIT BE INFORMALLY PRESENTED TO GENERAL CACERES, ALONG THE LINES AND FOR THE PURPOSES OUTLINED ABOVE. HOWEVER, EVEN ASSUMING A FAVORABLE RESPONSE IN PRINCIPLE, WE KNOW THAT THE GENDARMERIE BUDGET CANNOT ABSORB THE COSTS NEEDED FOR DEVELOPING INFORMANTS, FOR INCENTIVE AWARDS, FOR TRAVEL AND, POSSIBLY, FOR PER DIEM. AT THIS POINT IN TIME THE USG WOULD HAVE TO PROVIDE THE FUNDS, AND WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO SO STATE.

9. THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT THE SUM OF \$15,000 SHOULD BE
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SUFFICIENT TO PROVE WHETHER THE INTELLIGENT UNIT PROJECTS WOULD BE FEASIBLE, COST EFFECTIVE, AND WORTHY OF MAINTENANCE. IF FUNDING IS APPROVED, THE BARO WILL HANDLE DISBURSEMENTS.

10. ACTION IS REQUESTED: IT IS REQUESTED THAT THE EMBASSY BE AUTHORIZED TO DISCUSS THE CREATION OF THE PROPOSED UNIT WITH THE GENDARMERIE AND TO STATE THAT WE ARE AUTHORIZED TO MEET NON-COMMODITY EXPENSES NOT TO EXCEED MORE THAN \$15,000 UNDER TERMS THAT ARE MUTUALLY AGREEABLE.

11. ASSUMING APPROVAL OF PARAGRAPH 10, IT IS REQUESTED THAT PART II.A.3 (SHORT TERM ENFORCEMENT GOALS) OF THE REVISED EMBASSY NARCOTICS ACTION PLAN (REF D PAGE 25) BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING LANGUAGE:

"J. SEEK THE CREATION, ON AN EXPERIMENTAL BASIS OF AN INTELLIGENCE UNIT WITH THE GENDARMERIE WHICH WOULD CONCENTRATE ON LOCATION AND DESTRUCTION OF COCAINE LABORATORIES IN THE NORTHEAST, WITH SOME OPERATING EXPENSES TO BE MET BY THE USG.

HIGH PRIORITY, HIGH FEASIBILITY, 4/74."

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DRUG CONTROL, INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION, COCAINE, ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, NEGOTIATIONS, INTELLIGENCE PERSONNEL, LABORATORIES, PROPOSALS (BID), CRIME DAT A, POLICE FORCES, POLICE INVESTIGATIONS, BUDGET ESTIMATES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 JAN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BUENOS00543
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DG ALTERED
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: BUENOS AIRES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740126/aaaaaxra.tel
Line Count: 171
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A) BA 9340
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17 JUN 2002 by garlanwa>; APPROVED <26 DEC 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROPOSAL FOR US SUPPORTED GOA INTELLIGENCE UNIT
TAGS: SNAR, PINR, AR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005